

# **Tiverton Town Council Landfill Subcommittee**

## **Regular Meeting Minutes: March 21, 2007**

### **I: Call to Order**

Chairman Wyman called the meeting to order at 3:05 PM at the Tiverton Town Hall.

Members present: T. Ramotowski, J. Fernandes, R. Hart, D. Wilbur, D. Webster (Director of Public Works), and W. G. Steckman (Town Administrator).

Members absent: None.

### **II: Approval of Minutes**

#### **MOTION 1:**

Mr. Fernandes made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2007 regular meeting as submitted. Mr. Hart seconded the motion.

VOTE: Motion passed 5-0-2 (Chairman Wyman and Mr. Ramotowski abstained)..

### **III: Additions/Changes/Acceptance of Agenda**

Mr. Hart asked RI-DEM was requiring a height survey for the landfill every 6 months because its height was getting close to the limit set in the operating license. Mr. Webster replied that RI-DEM could order the Town to do that, but such an order is not presently in effect. The Town's engineering consultant for the landfill, Pare Engineering, does recommend biannual height surveys. Mr. Ramotowski asked how much the Town was charged for the annual height survey. Mr. Webster stated that he did not remember the exact figure, but he could get it for the Subcommittee if necessary. Mr. Ramotowski noted that the Town had recently obtained substantial amounts of fill from various construction projects, and had stored the material at the landfill for use as daily cover. Do piles of fill/cover intended for future use at the landfill count against the height limit in the operating license? Mr. Webster replied that stored fill did not count against the limit, because the limit is for the permanent height of the landfill. Biannual height surveys will be required by RI-DEM if/when the height of the landfill comes within six feet of the approved height limit.

Mr. Fernandes asked how the Town planned to let the public know about the recently approved spring and fall yard waste collections. Mr. Steckman noted that

the first of the new yard waste collections will occur the fall – after the new trash/recyclables contract is in effect. Mr. Webster suggested that notice could be given via the Town website, during the announcement portions of the Town Council meetings, and in local newspapers.

#### **IV: Public Input**

No members of the public were in attendance; therefore, there was no public input.

#### **V: Gray's Pond ACM**

Mr. Webster reported that, as of last week, the Town had been receiving material from the dredging operations occurring at Gray's Pond in Little Compton. Trucks are bringing in 7 – 8 loads of material a day at no cost to the Town. Ultimately, the Town should receive between 2000 to 3000 cubic yards of material from this source. The material coming in has been de-watered, and contains some fine-grained particulates. Mr. Wilbur asked if the material was mostly silt. Mr. Webster replied in the affirmative, and stated that it also contained some rocks as well. The material has been approved for use by RI-DEM for daily and final cover.

Chairman Wyman asked if the material was being set aside for future use. Mr. Webster replied that some was being set aside, and some was being used for daily cover.

#### **VI: Landfill Traffic Counts – Counts to Date**

Mr. Webster noted that traffic counts had resumed at the landfill on March 1, 2007. The data collected this year will be compared to the data collected last year at approximately the same time period. Mr. Webster distributed copies of the results of the traffic counts to date. It is too early to draw definite conclusions from the data, but for the first three weeks the vehicle counts are lower than for the same time period last year. It should be noted that the landfill rules changed last year on April 1, 2006 – commercial trash was no longer allowed. There might have been a “rush” of people using the landfill in March of 2006 to get rid of things before the rules changed. Thus, we need to collect data after April 1, 2007 to make meaningful comparisons.

Mr. Ramotowski asked if the traffic counts were being affected by recyclables drop-offs. Last year, recyclables were dropped near the attendant's shack at the landfill entrance. A person did not have to enter the landfill to drop off recyclables. Now, the collection containers for recyclables are located deep within the landfill, and someone who wishes to drop off recyclables only must enter the landfill. Are such trips being counted as landfill visits during the vehicle counts currently in progress? Mr. Webster stated that such trips probably were being counted and might skew the traffic counts a little.

## **VII: Renewal of Contract with Pare Corporation**

Mr. Webster stated that he and Mr. Steckman had met with representatives of Pare Engineering last Friday to discuss the upcoming expiration of the engineering services contract for the landfill. The present contract expires on 30 June 2007. Pare had requested the meeting to see what the Town's intentions were with regard to a possible renewal of the contract. Pare is interested in submitting a proposal to provide engineering services for the landfill for the next three years.

Mr. Steckman stated that he had spoken with the Town Solicitor about the contract. Because the contract is for "professional services", it does not have to go out for bids. Thus, if the proposal from Pare is acceptable in both a technical and a financial sense, then it can be approved and enacted by the Town Council. Mr. Webster noted that Pare has served as the Town's engineering firm for the landfill for some time now and, thus, it had built up a considerable amount of "corporate knowledge" concerning the landfill and its operation. Both Mr. Steckman and Mr. Webster noted that the Town was satisfied with Pare's performance under the present contract for landfill engineering services.

Mr. Ramotowski noted that there had been some dissatisfaction with Pare's billing practices under the old contract and asked if those issues had been resolved. Mr. Webster indicated that the bills from Pare were fine now; about 3-4 months ago, Pare had started providing invoices with a much greater level of detail than what the Town had previously been receiving.

## **VIII: RIRRC Proposal for Higher Recycling Rate Requirements**

Mr. Webster reported that he had met with representatives from RIRRC on 27 February 2007. The State is concerned about preserving the useable life of the Central Landfill, but trash is piling up quickly. One way to extend the life of the Central Landfill is for the Towns that use it to do a better job of removing recyclable materials from their trash streams. RIRRC is proposing that the recycling percentage required for the lower municipal tipping fee be increased from its present value of 20% to 35% by 2011. The amount of trash that each town can bring to the Central Landfill for the lowest tipping fee will also decrease over time, although there is a provision in the formula for taking into account population growth.

Mr. Webster distributed a handout that contained data on trash generation and recycling for all towns in Rhode Island. Presently, few are meeting the new proposed recycling requirement of 35%, and it is very unlikely that goal can be met in any town unless a "pay-as-you-throw" system were to be enacted.

Mr. Webster noted that these regulation changes do not presently affect Tiverton, but the latest engineering estimate for the useable life of the landfill from Pare is that we have about eight more years of use left. That means after about the year

2015, Tiverton will have to transport its garbage to the Central Landfill, and thus, it will be responsible for meeting all of RIRRC's mandates. Mr. Webster also noted that Pare has estimated that Tiverton now recycles about 19% of its waste stream, and the Town will have to do better once it starts using the Central Landfill. In fact, if it could do better now, it might be able to extend the closing date of the landfill by a couple of years.

Mr. Ramotowski noted that a significant portion of the recyclables generated by the Town of Tiverton was composed of scrap metal and white goods sold for salvage. Does RIRRC count such items when it calculates a town's compliance or non-compliance with its recycling targets? Mr. Webster replied in the affirmative. Mr. Ramotowski asked what the plan was for increasing the percentage of Tiverton's waste stream that was being recycled. Mr. Webster stated that most residents were trying to comply with the recycling mandate, so it was unlikely that the recycling percentage could be raised significantly without the institution of a "pay-as-you-throw" system. Such a system might also extend the useable life of the municipal landfill by a year or two.

#### **XI: New Trash/Recycling Collection and Disposal Contract with Patriot Disposal**

Mr. Webster stated that he had met with representatives of Patriot Disposal last week. Patriot is going to be the Town's trash/recyclables collection contractor starting on 01 July 2007. When the new contract was initially under discussion, the issue of using a more automated trash collection system had come up. This type of system would consist of a one-man truck that would use a mechanical arm to pick up and empty specially designed trash containers. The truck would only pick up trash placed in the special containers – anything outside of the containers, including additional bags, etc., would not be collected. Such a system can also be used for the collection of recyclables. The containers are smaller (30 gallon capacity) than the trash containers, and the type of recyclables collection would alternate every other week (bottles/cans one week and paper/cardboard the next week). Mr. Webster distributed copies of a memorandum summarizing his discussions with Patriot Disposal on this issue to all the members of the Subcommittee.

Mr. Ramotowski asked how such a truck would pick up large, flattened cardboard boxes. Mr. Webster stated that only items that fit into the recyclables containers would be picked up. Large items like that would have to be cut up into smaller pieces.

Mr. Webster stated that during the initial discussions, Patriot Disposal had indicated that it would be willing to purchase the trash containers the Town would initially need to implement such a system, but the Town would have to purchase the containers for the recyclables. Mr. Webster estimated that the recycling

containers would cost the Town about \$180,000.00 – and that figure included a grant of \$120,000.00 from RIRRC for the containers.

Chairman Wyman stated that he was not in favor of the complete proposal because it was expensive and represented a huge change in how these materials were presently being handled in Tiverton. Could the Town opt to use the one-man trucks to collect trash, but keep the standard recycling trucks that picked up both cans and paper each week? Mr. Steckman stated that the automated collection system would have to be implemented in the coming fiscal year, but the budget is very tight, and it was unlikely \$180,000.00 could be found to finance it. Mr. Ramotowski stated that he had seen trucks using automated arms dumping paper recycling containers at the Navy Base in Newport. The containers are dumped over the driver's cab, and much of the material can blow away from the truck if there is a breeze blowing. Mr. Steckman stated that there are trucks with arms on the side that are not as messy and manage to dump almost all of the trash into the truck's bed.

Mr. Webster stated that the Town also needed to consider the effect of such a system on its ability to implement a "pay-as-you-throw" program to meet RIRRC requirements once the Town starts to send its trash to the Central Landfill. The automated system might preclude the adoption of a "pay-as-you-throw" bag system in Town. Mr. Steckman noted that a "pay-as-you-throw" system would increase the amount of recyclables disposed of within Town, and that would probably trigger a request to renegotiate the collection contract by Patriot Disposal (because more material would need to be trucked to Johnston vice to our landfill).

Mr. Webster noted that this issue could be brought up again after the first 5-year portion of the collection contract has passed. Mr. Steckman stated that the option of using the automated trash and recyclables collection trucks will be brought up at the next Town Council meeting for a decision. If the Town Council elects to implement the automated system, Patriot needs time to purchase and take delivery on the special trucks needed to empty the containers.

At this time, Mr. Webster left the meeting.

#### **X: Date and Time for the Next Meeting**

Mr. Steckman stated that Mr. Webster had decided to retire from his position as Tiverton's Director of Public Works at the end of his current contract (17 May 2007). He had indicated that he was willing to stay on a bit longer to give the Town time to hire his replacement – up to 13 September 2007. Mr. Steckman noted, and the Subcommittee unanimously agreed, that Mr. Webster had done an excellent job for the Town of Tiverton since he was hired, and that he would be very difficult to replace. Mr. Steckman stated that he would be asking the

Town Council to extend Mr. Webster's contract to 13 September 2007, at its next regular meeting.

There being no further business to discuss, the Landfill Subcommittee's March 21, 2007 regular meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM.

These minutes were recorded and compiled by T. Ramotowski